

Cancel Claims 18 - 19, without prejudice.

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REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Official Action dated May 12, 2003.

Claim 17 has been revised to more clearly define the nature of the invention recited by that claim. Claims 18 - 19 have been cancelled, without prejudice, in view of the revisions made to Claim 17. Claim 20 has been amended to depend from Claim 17 in view of the cancellation of Claims 18 - 19.

At page 2, first paragraph of the Official Action, the Examiner questions statements made by Applicant at pages 2 - 3 of the specification discussing the known prior art references. Page 2, last paragraph of the specification, refers to two publications disclosing four circuit electrical connector systems. As noted in the specification, these known systems are not capable of providing four (4) different electrical circuits simultaneously since the devices include only three ports for receiving three individual circuit modules. Therefore, at most, only three separate circuits can be provided simultaneously.

The Wise patent (U.S. Patent No. 5,092,787) is discussed separately at the first full paragraph of page 3 of the specification. Applicant did not represent that this patent

illustrates a connector device for providing four separate circuits. On the contrary, the Wise patent has been cited only as being one example of "Other known electrical distribution systems...".

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At page 2 of the Official Action, Claims 1 - 4, 7, 10, 12 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as being anticipated by Wise. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's conclusion. Independent Claims 1 and 12 each define an electrical connector system which is capable of simultaneously providing, at the selection of the user, one, two, three or four different predetermined electrical circuits. Contrary to the devices disclosed and claimed by Applicant, the Wise patent is directed to a ten (10) wire system employing two duplex circuit modules (See duplex 44', 45' and duplex 44, 45, illustrated at Figure 1 of the drawing. Also see the specification at Column 7, line 14 - 26.) Therefore, the devices disclosed in the Wise patent are capable of only providing two or four separate electrical circuit simultaneously, and are not capable of providing one, two, three or four circuits simultaneously as disclosed and claimed by Applicant.

Independent Claims 1 and 12 have been rejected as being anticipated by Wise et al. It is well established that a rejection of a claim based on anticipation is inappropriate

unless a single prior art reference discloses all features of the claim, as arranged in the claim. Stated in other words, a rejection of a claim as being anticipated by the prior art requires the Patent & Trademark Office to establish a strict identity of invention between the disclosure of the applied prior art reference and each rejected claim. Connell v. Sears, Roebuck Co., 220 USPQ 193 (Fed. Cir. 1983). In the instant case, since the applied Wise et al patent does not teach or suggest a connector device capable, at the selection of the user, of providing one, two, three or four separate electrical circuits simultaneously, there is clearly no strict identity of invention between Wise and independent Claims 1 and 12 (and dependent Claims 2 - 4, 7, 10 and 15).

At page 2 of the Official Action, Claims 5 - 6, 8 - 11, 13 - 14 and 16 - 20 have been rejected as being obvious over Wise. For the reasons discussed above, Applicant submits that independent Claims 1 and 12 are allowable over the prior art applied to reject them. Therefore, dependent Claims 5 - 6, 8 - 11, 13 - 14 and 16 are allowable, at least for the same reasons as their respective parent independent parent Claims 1 and 12.

Independent Claim 17 has been revised to specifically recite that the claimed electrical connector is limited to only eight electrical conductors, in an arrangement specifically defined by this claim. Contrary to the electrical connector now defined by independent Claim 17, the devices disclosed by the Wise patent

are limited to ten electrical conductors, which are not arranged in the same manner as the eight electrical conductors now defined by revised independent Claim 17. Applicant respectfully submits that there is no suggestion or motivation in the prior art itself to modify the disclosure of Wise et al in any manner rendering the electrical connector defined by independent Claim 17 obvious. On the contrary, the only motivation for modifying Wise to meet the limitations of independent Claim 17 would be derived from Applicant's own disclosure, and it is improper to use Applicant's own disclosure as a guide for modifying a reference to meet a claim. See, for example, Orthopedic Equipment Company v. United States, 217 USPQ 193 (Fed. Cir. 1983). Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 17, as revised herein, is allowable over the disclosure of Wise.

At page 2 of the Official Action, Claims 1 - 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103 as being obvious over the Electri-Pak 8 publication in view of Wise and the "admitted prior art". Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's conclusion. The Electri-Pak 8 publication, as discussed in the Background section of Applicant's specification, is not capable of simultaneously providing, at the selection of the user, one, two, three or four separate electrical circuits. On the contrary, since the disclosure of this publication teaches only three ports, a maximum of only three separate circuits can be simultaneously provided. Therefore, this publication does not teach or suggest the features of independent Claims 1 and 12,

each of which defines an electrical connector capable of simultaneously providing one, two, three or four separate electrical circuits, at the selection of the user.

The Wise patent has been discussed above, and it too, is not capable of providing one, two, three or four separate electrical circuits simultaneously, at the selection of the user. Accordingly, the Wise patent does not teach or suggest the electrical connectors defined by independent Claims 1 and 12.

It is unclear how the Official Action intends to apply the "admitted prior art" in combination with the Electri-Pak 8 publication and the Wise patent. In any event, since neither the Electri-Pak 8 publication or the Wise patent teach or suggest an electrical connector capable of simultaneously, at the selection of the user, providing one, two, three or four separate electrical circuits, these two references in combination with the "admitted prior art" will not teach or suggest the electrical connector defined by independent Claims 1 and 12.

Applicant therefore submits that independent Claims 1 and 12 are allowable over this combination of prior art. Dependent Claims 2 - 11 and 13 - 16, which depend directly or indirectly from one of the independent claims, are each allowable at least for the same reasons as their respective parent independent claims.

Independent Claim 17 has been revised to recite that the electrical connector defined by the claim is limited to eight electrical conductors arranged as recited in the claim. Therefore, this claim is not taught or suggested by Wise which discloses only electrical connectors formed from ten conductors which are arranged differently from that recited in independent Claim 17. The Electri-Pak 8 publication, although disclosing an electrical connector having eight electrical conductors, does not teach or suggest the arrangement of the eight conductors to define four separate circuits, as specifically recited in independent Claim 17. As noted above, it is unclear to Applicant how the "admitted prior art" is being applied to reject independent Claim 17.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 17, as revised herein, is allowable over the prior art applied in the Official Action. Dependent Claim 20, which depends directly from independent Claim 17, is allowable at least for the same reasons as parent independent Claim 17.

Applicant submits that all pending claims are in condition
for allowance, and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark P. Stone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Stone" clearly distinguishable.

Mark P. Stone
Attorney for Applicant
25 Third Street, 4th Floor
Stamford, CT 06905
(203) 329-3355

REVISED CLAIMS 17 & 20

Claim 17. (amended) A modular electrical power system comprising:

a housing [having at least] consisting of eight electrical conductors extending therethrough;

said eight electrical conductors comprising four live electrical conductors, two neutral electrical conductors, and two ground electrical conductors;

said electrical conductors adapted to define [at least] four different predetermined electrical circuits;

two of said predetermined electrical circuits each being formed from a different one of said live electrical conductors, a first said ground conductor shared by said two predetermined electrical circuits, and a first said neutral conductor shared by said two predetermined electrical circuits;

two other of said predetermined electrical circuits each being formed from a different one of said live electrical conductors, a second said ground conductor shared by said two

other predetermined electrical circuits, and a second said neutral conductor shared by said two other predetermined electrical circuits;

said housing defining at least [one port] four ports for removably receiving at least four circuit modules [one circuit module] for defining simultaneously at the selection of the user [at least one of] said four different predetermined electrical circuits.

Claim 20. (amended) The system as claimed in Claim [19] 17 wherein each of said plurality of circuit modules is removably receivable in any one of said plurality of ports.

REPLACEMENT CLAIMS 17 & 20

AI Claim 17. (amended) A modular electrical power system comprising:

a housing consisting of eight electrical conductors extending therethrough;

said eight electrical conductors comprising four live electrical conductors, two neutral electrical conductors, and two ground electrical conductors;

said electrical conductors adapted to define four different predetermined electrical circuits;

two of said predetermined electrical circuits each being formed from a different one of said live electrical conductors, a first said ground conductor shared by said two predetermined electrical circuits, and a first said neutral conductor shared by said two predetermined electrical circuits;

two other of said predetermined electrical circuits each being formed from a different one of said live electrical

conductors, a second said ground conductor shared by said two other predetermined electrical circuits, and a second said neutral conductor shared by said two other predetermined electrical circuits;

a¹ said housing defining at least four ports for removably receiving at least four circuit modules for defining simultaneously at the selection of the user said four different predetermined electrical circuits.

a² Claim 20. (amended) The system as claimed in Claim 17 wherein each of said plurality of circuit modules is removably receivable in any one of said plurality of ports.
